régime had consummated Bessarabia's ruin, and its people were dying of hunger. The irruption of the Rumanian army was not the triumphal arrival of a liberator but the invasion of a hunger-stricken horde. The requisitions for obtaining supplies both for the army and for the population of Moldavia, on account of the haste and disorder with which they were carried out, assumed the aspect of revolting spoliations and led the natives to ask " what sort of brothers are these hogs and these robbers? "

" Our army's attitude was both offensive and aggressive, in conformity with the usages of war, in short, that of an army of occupation in an enemy country. When the time came to organize the civil administration of Bessarabia, very few of the regular functionaries agreed to be transferred to a remote and unsafe province. . . . Adventurers, those who had nothing to lose and who were under the threat of being dismissed or imprisoned, accepted to join in this " campaign to Siberia " in the hope of being rehabilitated or of becoming rich. For a long time the transfer of a civil functionary to Bessarabia was considered as a redoubtable disciplinary sanction. . . . ."

" The Bessarabians have found out what elements we can contribute to the restoration of their former material prosperity. These are poverty, demoralization, political debauchery, a decade of violence, fraud and illegality. Hence the permanent hostility with which they regard us; a state of irritability which is maintained owing to the prevailing wretchedness."

The main responsibility for this astounding state of affairs should be ascribed to the Bratianus, who inaugurated and maintained this system for ten years. When finally they were ejected from office, their Bessarabian partisans began to quarrel among themselves and attack most virulently their former regional leader, M. Inculeț. They started a paper called " The Voice of Bessarabia " in 1929, in which their former leaders were denounced as vulgar and dangerous adventurers, robbers and criminals. As for their former local chief Inculeț, he was accused of having retired to Jassi in order to enjoy in peace the thousands of millions he had accumulated by a triple betrayal of Russia, Bessarabia, and

RUMANIA

666 Rumania. The paper concluded by an exhortation addressed
571 to Bessarabians to evict Inculeţ from the political arena of Bessarabia where he had operated as though this region had been an African colony, and the appeal concluded with the hortatory incitation "Eject this putrefaction from Bessarabia."

661 In spite of the severe financial crisis which afflicted this
563 region, the fiscal agents of the government insisted on collecting taxes even when in years of drought the peasantry
661 was destitute and utterly unable to pay. The methods employed were so barbarous that they provoked several interpellations in the Rumanian Chamber. During its sitting of Dec. 10th, 1926, M. V. Madgearu denounced the abusive and inquisitorial methods by which Bessarabian tax-payers had been sold up and his arraignment was confirmed by similar indictments formulated by a member of the (then) government majority.

423 In October, 1930, a revolt broke out in southern Bess-
563 arabia. The peasants of the village of Baimaklia, near the town of Kagui, revolted and burned down the residence of a
661 big landowner because certain grazing lands were given to him by the State instead of being distributed among the peasants. That similar abuses are current may be inferred from an article in the "Aurora" of June 3rd, 1926, which is headed "The pauperization and humiliation of the Bessarabians," and in which it is related how certain State lands were put up for sale at Balţi, and though the peasantry of six adjoining villages had combined and offered 400,000 lei more than three big landowners, the lands were allocated to the latter, obviously through favouritism. That State functionaries often act with an arbitrariness and brutality
563 inconceivable in a civilized State may be illustrated by
661 the Soroca affair, which is of quite recent occurrence. In January, 1932, six Jewish youths, inhabitants of Soroca, on the Dniester, after coming to terms with the frontier-guards as to the amount of the bribe they would have to pay to be allowed to escape into Russia, and after they had paid 40,000 lei, were ambuscaded and shot down. In order to instil terror into the local population, their bodies were hurled pell-mell on a sledge which was driven by a soldier

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

p 89

CHAPTER VI

UNDER GERMAN CONTROL

The nineteen-thirties saw an acute sharpening of the conflict between the popular forces and the Rumanian ruling class which was mirrored in all spheres of the country's life. Neither of these two was undivided. On the one side was the majority of the people—the peasants and workers and some intellectuals. On the other the court, the generals, the vast bureaucracy, the professional politicians, industrialists, bankers and big landowners. The peasantry was hardly organized and was split by national divisions, as a part of the non-Rumanian rural population supported Minority parties which were mostly opposed to united action with the corresponding Rumanian parties. The workers' movement suffered from similar divisions and from splits caused by ideological differences. Numerically it was weak owing to the small number of industrial workers. Moreover all workers' organizations were subject to the most severe restrictions.[1] The ruling class of Rumania was united in its determination to prevent any measures harming its interests. The divisions in its ranks were due to differences as to the best means of maintaining its privileged position and to competition between the established section

[1] The most vigorous Left Wing Party were the Communists, whose organizations, though illegal, continued in spite of repressive measures. They were most influential in Bessarabia, the Bukovina and the industrial regions.

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

of this class and those who wanted to secure this dominant position for themselves.

These divisions were complicated by the personality of King Carol and the attitudes of different sections of the ruling circles to his personal regime. One group put its trust in the royal dictatorship and included supporters of the pro-French and pro-British wing. Many prominent politicians from both great parties were attracted to this camp, the Liberals Tatarescu and Micescu, for example, and the peasant leaders Vaida-Voevod and Calinescu. Another group went over to the extreme Right Wing and supported the Iron Guard and similar but smaller organizations, and these inclined to a pro-German foreign policy. There were naturally some who tried to steer a middle course.[1]

Economic and financial considerations played an important and often decisive part in this political alignment. The Liberals had a great interest in a pro-Allied policy as they were closely connected with British, French and American investments in Rumania. The extreme Right Wing counted on support from Germany, which was readily given, and in return it facilitated the growth of Germany's political and economic influence. Both groups had discarded both the cloak and the spirit of democracy, and their leanings towards dictatorship, varying in form but not in substance, facilitated the victory of

[1] C. Bratianu, leader of the Liberals, joined Carol's 'party' but only in order to keep his great industrial and financial interests. Maniu, the leader of the Peasant Party, remained passive. He showed sympathy to the Iron Guard in their opposition to the king's dictatorship and later joined Bratianu in seeking to restrain them: but he retained his pro-French leanings.